

## **June 2011 Overview**

### **Yosemite Backcountry Trail Crew**

#### **Mark Allee: Supervisor**

At last! June has gifted us with good weather. The days of snow are behind us and hot sunny weather floods canyons, creeks and valleys with snowmelt. The once fledgling Yosemite crew is now spreading its wings and learning to fly. We have specializations and proficiencies developing amongst our diverse personalities. We have been witnessed from outside as a good crew and thus the gauntlet has been thrown down to become a great crew. A crew that will leave its legacy not just on the land and in the hearts of its members, but on the Backcountry Program itself. Our sponsors continue to be satisfied and impressed as we chew through valley floor trail maintenance hungry for the backcountry. Excitement is building; the date for our camp move has been officially set. On June 28<sup>th</sup> we move to City Camp near Rancheria Falls at Hetch Hetchy reservoir where we will stay for approximately one month.

The outward gush of water brings a steadily increasing inward flow of tourists. The waterfalls are spectacular and we are graced with awe-inspiring vistas every day. Our crew's customer services skills remain excellent as we answer numerous questions from domestic and international tourists on a daily basis. Public support for our work is high and hikers are eager to thank the crew for their hard work. What can we say? It feels good to be appreciated.

Weekend trips have taken the crew far and wide with backpacking skills improving. The crew was reminded that CCC stands for "change, change, change." As weather and logistics caused some weekend plans to be altered. This highlighted the necessity of always being prepared for everything and anything which is lesson number one in the Red Dawn General's playbook. We visited the Indian museum and Awahnee village, the visitor center, and bookstore which inspired us to hike and marvel amongst the giants of the Mariposa Grove. Highcountry snowmelt opened new trails and the crew explored Mono Meadows and Illilouette Creek making the wise decision not to ford on the way to Mt Starr King. A cross-country route to the Devils Dance floor was forged turning up an ancient Awahnee campsite complete with mountain lion cries echoing down the granite canyons. Many grottoes and waterfalls were discovered on Wildcat Creek and the trip was capped off by a dance-party on the dance floor. The crew also powered out to Laurel Lake and Miguel Meadows where the relaxation and views were fine. Our final weekend held the much anticipated town run. We resupplied at many different establishments from Fresno to Oakhurst consuming many different civilized delights along the way. We made phone calls, washed laundry, bought books and the day culminated with a pizza party courtesy of the Red Dawn General. We also hit some last-minute day hikes to local points of interest around Foresta.

Our education curriculum for the month was diverse and fun as Dustin, Emily and Morgan kicked off our series of crew-led classes with great automotive maintenance, fun art and drawing, and stellar astronomy classes. Guest trainer Cindy Porter came out to teach and certify the crew in Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI). It was a great skill and resume-building opportunity for the crew that contained exciting role-playing and tough bookwork from an excellent and experienced instructor. Thanks Cindy! Cindy also volunteered helping us in the kitchen, shuttling vehicles, and out on the grade remembering

just how tough trailwork can be. We were treated to a lively and informative reenactment performance by Ranger Shelton Johnson on the Buffalo Soldiers and their service as ranger cavalry in Yosemite. Thanks Shelton! The crew also enjoyed a rainy ranger-led geology walk in the valley. We developed our beautiful poetic, and metaphor laden Mission Statement to help guide us through the season. Good job Yosemite!

We celebrated Javi's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday with delicious oatmeal raisin cookies and sodas from Capt Eyeball that fueled an epic game of capture the flag. Feliz cumpleaños Javi! Sponsor Anna Asp continued her series of back strength and health classes. Thanks for keeping us safe Anna! Wilderness survival skills and training were in full effect and the crew loved every minute of an all-day intensive training provided by Mark, Jeremy, Anna and Felipe. Topics included: building primitive shelters, bow-drill fire making, knots, wilderness first aid, and hunting and gathering. Highlight of the day was ice-cold, vegetarian Mikey slaying a snow stake with a hand-made bolo.

**WORK PRODUCTION:** May ended with the crew freeing Glacier Point from snow just in time for the road to open. Man, what a lunchtime view! We persevered through our biggest challenge yet on the heart stopping Yosemite Falls Trail with a solid week and a half of heavy brushing and granite stair climbing. The blood, sweat, toil and tears were repaid in ground scores. While there, we were visited by living legend and Backcountry guru- our fearless leader Phil LaFollette. Thanks Phil for the support, wisdom, and news of the outside world! From the thundering falls we moved on to the deceptively long Four Mile Trail from whose scenic vantage point we watched the valley progressively flood. We also wrapped up the John Muir Trail, finished the valley floor trails, and completed our first trail rehab/construction project. We volunteered for a work exchange with Camp Mather to secure our spot at Debriefing battling brutal whitethorn the whole way. While there, we saw a CCC Greenwood crew on spike. Yeah Greenwood! Paul Spring and the camp crew at Camp Mather were very good to us and the crew got treated to dinner and their first taste of ice cream. Andy and Javi were selected for the privilege and honor of representing the crew on Half-Dome helping to put up the cables. Nice job Javi and Andy!

We had the good fortune to host the Sequoia Vets crew at our Foresta home for one night on their way south. It was awesome to see another crew and swap stories around the fire. Thanks for visiting Sequoia Vets! P.S. we still have your crew journal.

#### **JUNE CREW QUOTES:**

Amber (web Montana) "The sun is warm, the grass is green."

Aaron (web, Maryland) "I think Manzanita is my soul bush."

Mira (web, Michigan) "Happy Birthday Dad, I love you."

Mikey (web, Ohio) "My body is a temple."

Andy (web, Minnesota) "Good people, good food, good times, easy money."

Javan (CCC, Fortuna) "If you can experience the whole world then you'll have a fulfilling life. And if you know the whole world then there's nothing out there for you."

Loni (CCC, Fortuna) "Hi Lindsey!"

Erin (web, Florida) "Tight swale [finger snap]."

Emily (CCC, San Luis Obispo) "Some of them are killers."

Dustin (CCC, Redding) "Audi Foresta, like the car."

Javi (CCC, Inland Empire) "Sunny in Foresta."

Morgan (web, California) "History is written in the stars."

Until next time....

Safe season to all crews.

Love, Yosemite

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

Vulnerable, blind and naked the bear is born into  
this world. Rough and capable with desire to be  
strong of heart and to grow its original nature.

When we are born, like the bear, we are children of  
the wilderness, returning to protect our mother.

We hail from all different lands, and like the bear have travelled  
a great distance bringing with us our packs and pasts.

Some of us are killers, some of us are wise, and others  
healers.

When the ice thaws and sunlight opens our eyes, we  
Sharpen our claws with fury and haste preparing for  
Yosemite.

The wilderness provides for us a sanctuary of beauty.

Here we replace old friends with new friends and  
new lessons are learned. It nurtures us as though  
we were its own and, in turn, as a trail crew must,  
protect the land as though it were our own cub.

We curve and carve step by step up and into the mountain,  
blazing a trail with fortitude and haste. A  
scattered talus of rocks reformed and stacked for  
our children's future.

In the wild, bears have one adversary – themselves.  
Like the bears, we face that same mirror, refusing to  
remain as we once were.

But what makes bears different from us?  
We walk with our feet, they walk with their paws.  
We have nails. They have claws.

Unlike our brother bear, when we encounter shouts  
of discouragement and flying rocks meant to hinder,  
we will rise to the occasion and say "NAY!" "Put  
down those rocks!" We will stand strong and when one  
cub is not enough for the task we will use our combined  
grizzly strength to overcome the climb.

The more we try to understand the bear, the more  
it makes us wild. But, we still walk from rock bottom  
to be a brother of the bear.

We stomp as one through the forest as brothers and  
sisters. The untamed beast that is the bear, inspires  
our change for the world. Strong and enduring  
as our trails in Yosemite.

By the end, the rivers and rocks will testify on our  
behalf. Valleys will echo with our shouts as we  
pass by and only our footprints disappears with time.